The Cherokee Observer

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Election Commission Deny Petitioners After Two Year Wait

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jack Edward Crittenden, 918-456-9559

Hastings Shade, 918-772-2266

After waiting two years for a valid commission to be seated former Deputy Chief Hastings Shade and Jack Edward Crittenden both of life long Resident Cherokees from Tahlequah who were proponents of four initiative petitions circulated for signatures in 2004 say that approximately 6,000 Cherokee signatures were denied by the Cherokee Nation Election Commission voting 3-2 not to receive the petitions because the 90 day period had expired.

Principal Chief Chad Smith's two recent appointments Drew Wilcoxen from Muskogee and Patsy Morton of Stilwell along with Rick Dorherty of Stilwell, voted to deny proponents from submitting petitions. Dr. Charles Hathaway of Tahlequah the Co-Chair, and Jim Briggs of Locust Grove the Chair, both supported the Commission receiving the petitions.

The petitions proposed to place four questions on the next ballot for a vote of the people. 1. To require residency be established within the jurisdiction to vote by absentee ballot, 2. To recall the 1999 Constitution, 3. To require residency within the boundary for all Delegates on Constitutional Conventions 4. To elect Judicial Appeals Tribunal Justices instead of being appointed by any chief.

Cherokee petition law states that petitions are to be returned to the Election Commission within 90 days after their original filing. Crittenden, a nephew to Don Chiefkee Council 26 years, was given opportunity to present argument before the commission Thursday night where he said that until December 20, 2005 the validity of the commission had remained in question.

Chairman Briggs said and the law clearly says petitions are to be returned to the Commission not to employees of the Commission. Briggs who is a Tulsa attorney explained his opinion to the other Commissioners that the power of the people to petition is a very important right specified within the Constitution and if he as a commissioner is going to be lenient it would be toward the people.

Hathaway agreed saying that he had questions if the Commission even had the authority to rule on such a constitutional question.

Crittenden pointed out that the first power reserved by the people in the Cherokee Constitution is the power of the initiative to initiate change in the government and the second it the referendum to reverse decisions made by the Council. He said the power to petition is specifically reserved by the people as a check in the government and reflected that during the

Cherokee Nation Election Commission -

Drew Wilcoxen,
Patsy Morton,
Rick Dorherty,
Dr. Charles Hathaway,
Jim Briggs

2003 election protest the JAT went to extremes not to disenfranchise voters. Crittenden said that since the 1975 there have been approximately 30 petition drives but only one petition survived the process to the ballot and changed Councilors from running at large to by districts which provided more localized representation.

Crittenden said, oath of office Commissioners are the only officials within the Cherokee system that can be held accountable for the people to entrust petitions.

Wilcoxen remarked, o shove these up our noses,ing

Wilcoxen an attorney whose firm was paid over $600,000 last year by Cherokee Nation in the Arkansas Riverbed settlement was appointed by Smith to one of the two vacated seats by Special Judge Kyle Haskins from Tulsa and Rita Bunch Superintendent of Watts Schools. Both of those Chief appointments were Commissioners during the 2003 Election that ended in protest where numerous improprieties and alleged election fraud by Smith and his political slate of Council candidates were discovered within the trial. None of the alleged crimes have been prosecuted to date.

Although Haskins voted to select Hathaway as the fifth

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Pending Petitions Derail Chief's Plans for Lawsuit

Tahlequah - Cherokee Council voted in the February Regular Council Meeting to table a Legislative Act giving Principle Chief Chad Smith the authority to file a federal lawsuit that could cost Cherokees millions in an attempt to push the BIA out of the picture of approving constitutional changes.

Councilman Stanley Joe Crittenden, from Adair County and Co-Chair of the Rules Committee presented the Act making the motion to table it stating, "There is a petition getting ready to be filed that is dealing directly with the constitution. We have a full Election Commission seated now to legally receive the petition. I have been told the filing should take place Thursday. I would move that we table this pending the ruling by the court on the petition."

Cara Cowen, a Chief's slate Councilor from Rogers County said, "I don't understand. I didn't hear anything about a petition."

However Ed Crittenden, a 50 year resident Cherokee and a proponent to recall the 1999 Constitution said while petitions were being circulated for signatures he presented each of the four petitions and the facts to Cowen at the Cherokee Council House.

Councilor Bill John Baker, from Cherokee County who seconded the motion to table, responded to Cowen, "The purpose in tabling it is so we can get more information rather than us approve spending a million dollars to file a lawsuit in federal court for it to be stayed by the tribunal. That seems like not the best way to spend the Cherokee people's money. Apparently the court has told the proponents to wait until the Election Commission was seated to file it. The petition at issue that pertains specifically to this is a petition that specifically recalls this constitution." he said.

Cowen asked, "Is this the disenfranchisement of absentee voters outside the Cherokee Nation?"

Crittenden said Cowen was referring to one of the four petitions to be submitted, which seeks to place a question on the ballot for a vote of the people to require residency be established within the 14 County Jurisdiction to vote by absentee ballot and then only for good cause. The reasons specified are, if a voter is incapacitated like elders may not be able to get to the polls, if a voter is hospitalized or if on military duty. He said she was adamantly opposed to this question, which would create a democracy within the Cherokee election process.

Crittenden said, Cowen's responses were clear that she was more concerned with Cherokees living outside the boundaries being able to vote than assuring the majority voice of the people in our elections was with resident Cherokees inside the service area, to which the government and she could then be held responsible to provide services.

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Cherokee Freedmen Ruled Tribal Citizens

Tahlequah, OK - One of the most historic cases in the past 30 years was finalized Tuesday by the Cherokee Judicial Appeals Tribunal, (JAT), the tribe's highest Court, in a (2-1) ruling that descendants of Cherokee slaves, better known as Cherokee Freedmen, are full citizens of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, (CNO) according to the 1975 Cherokee Constitution and legally entitled to vote.

David Cornsilk, a Cherokee citizen serving as a Lay Advocate on behalf of Lucy Allen, a 73-year-old Cherokee Freedman, filed the case. Allen sued the tribal council, the tribal registrar and the tribal registration committee in November 2004 because legislation at the time said she had to prove she was "Cherokee by blood."

She alleged that was unconstitutional because it was more restrictive than the membership criteria set forth in Article III of the 1975 Constitution.

"I decided to file the lawsuit because I felt my family had rights they never got and they were denying us our civil liberties," Allen said. "My mother, father, grandfather had Indian blood — but they wanted to deny us."

Judicial Appeals Tribunal Justices Stacy Leeds and Darrell Dowty concurred that to exclude a class of citizens from membership, the constitution would have to do so with specific and clear language.

"Exclusion cannot be left to inference by omission or by silence," former Chief Justice Dowty said. "I therefore, concur (with Leeds) that Riggs v. Ummerteske must be reversed and that 11 CNCA No. 12 (the legislation that changed the status of Freedmen) is unconstitutional because it imposes a more restrictive requirement on membership (by blood only) than does the plain language of the Constitution of 1975," stated Dowty.

The majority opinion filed by Leeds states, "It has been argued (by CNO attorneys) that Cherokee Freedmen were forced on the Cherokee Nation by the federal government. This is simply not the case. In the Treaty of 1866, the Cherokee Nation agreed to extend citizenship to Freedmen and agreed to give them the same rights as "native" Cherokees.

It cannot be overstated that the 1866 Treaty is the exact same treaty where the Cherokee Nation agreed to have other Indian tribes (ultimately the Shawnee and Delaware) relocated inside the Cherokee Nation.

No one disputes that the Shawnee and Delaware are entitled to citizenship in the Cherokee Nation. The Shawnee and Delaware are not, however, Cherokee Indians.

Drafters of the 1975 Cherokee Constitution were well educated and some were attorneys and familiar with tribal legal history, the court ruling states.

They were aware that in 1967, the U.S. Court of Claims ruled the Cherokee Freedmen were entitled to receive payments from the Cherokee Nation judgment fund like any other Cherokee citizen listed on the Dawes Commission Rolls.

They cited other federal rulings involving the Freedmen.

The language of the 1975 Constitution does not specifically exclude Freedmen from continuing membership, the ruling states. The constitutional language requires membership by reference to the Dawes Commission Rolls and the Freedmen were included in those rolls," stated Leeds in her ruling.

Cornsilk said, "I think the court did what they were required to do — look at the Constitution in plain reading. The Constitution is supposed to be interpreted according to a layman's understanding."

Nathan Young, a Tahlequah Attorney and also President of the Cherokee Bar, commended Cornsilk's efforts.

"For a lay advocate, he's had the strongest impact of anyone in the past 25 to 30 years with this decision," Young said. "The bottom line is — there is no jurisdiction for anyone else to interpret it. This is an internal matter. This court has sole jurisdiction to interpret the Constitution. No one can play games with the decision," Young said.

Cornsilk, 47, said he "believes it's a heavy case — but for a very different reason. The manner in which the citizenship of the Freedmen began to be eroded in 1983 has many bigger issues than have been decided in this case."

During the seventies Freedmen were allowed to vote. United Keetoowah Band Chief George Wickliffe said that he witnessed, during the 1983 Principal Chief Election between Ross O. Swimmer and Perry Wheeler, Swimmer personally telling a group of Freedmen at a political rally in Ft. Gibson, they could not vote because they were not citizens by blood.

According to Butler Welch who ran as the Deputy Chief Candidate with Wheeler, Swimmer learned that Freedmen would not support him in that election. Welch said Swimmer made numerous efforts to undermine and prevent Freedmen from voting throughout the campaign.

"For over twenty years, these tribal citizens have been prevented from voting and from receiving tribal services they are rightfully entitled," said Cornsilk.

Just after the 2003 Cherokee Election, Cherokee Freedmen filed suit in the Washington D.C. federal court claiming Freedmen had been disenfranchised because they had not been allowed to vote. The case asks that the election be cast out until all Cherokee citizens can vote on the candidates and questions.

Two questions on the 2003 ballot asked if the BIA should be removed from oversight of future Constitutional Amendments and to approve a new 1999 Constitution.

Ed Crittenden, a Proponent on petitions to recall the 1999 Constitution said that Constitution abolishes all Cherokee citizens' rights to the US Constitution and Bill of Rights as provided under the 1975 Cherokee Constitution. Crittenden said, "The 1999 Constitution Convention created a document that actually sells Cherokees citizens out, forever leaving them only a remedy within the tribal court system with no avenue to appeal into federal courts."

Crittenden said, "It is an irony that descendants of Cherokee slaves still fighting for their rightful citizenship are the one thing actually protecting all Cherokee citizens from loosing our rights provided under the most respected Constitution in the world. The single reason why the BIA has not signed the 1999 Constitution into law totally disenfranchising every Cherokee citizen by their own government is because of the questions before the Court within the Freedmen case in Washington D.C.," stated Crittenden. "Cherokees have much to be thankful for because of our new brothers and sisters. There is a good chance the Freedmen have stopped something terrible from happening that could have never been undone."

Over A Million For Lobbyist and Public Relations Campaign

After heated debate in the January Regular Council meeting, the vote split (10-5) in favor of funding $1.25 million to create a public relation campaign and a political campaign contributions money pool.

The communication campaign will total $750,000 to "be used to produce and air a series of television, radio and print ads in local and state media to let people know the benefits that Cherokee Nation brings to it's citizens, local communities and the State overall," as stated in Principal Chief Chad Smith's one page "ga du gi" mission statement to the Council. Smith was listed as the Group Leader of the Principal Chief Group over the media funds. The only other statement within the budget narrative disclosing any plan of action for the expenditure was the statement, "This is similar in scope to projects done by other tribes including the Chickasaws."

The remainder of $500,000, a 104 percent increase over the 2005 amount of $245,000 spent last year, was earmarked for a program entitled "Get Out the Vote" also under the group entitled Principal Chief Group but listed Melissa Gower as the Group Leader. Gower is the Executive Director of Health Services for the Cherokee Nation. The Budget Narrative stated simply, "This budget supports the contributions made by committee decision to various candidates and political organizations and also supports "Get Out The Vote" activities." It said, "All such contributions shall be conducted in accordance with applicable Election Laws."

Linda O'Leary Councilor for the Delaware District and Chair of Executive Finance Committee made a motion that the proposed Modification Act not include the funding of the two items and was seconded by David Thornton of the Sequoyah District. A roll call vote was called. Ten voted to leave the media and campaign contribution money in the budget with five opposing the expenditure.

Deputy Chief Joe Grayson moved on to the next item on the agenda but as usual Cara Cowen of the Will Rogers District helped get him back on track and realize that the first item was not yet completed. Cowen then made a motion to pass the Act as written which was seconded by Don Garvin of the Three Rivers District, another slate member.

Discussion was called where several Councilors were vocal opposing the million plus dollar expenditures of the bill stating they felt the money would be better spent toward services for the people.

O'Leary took the floor stating, "We spend money here at the Cherokee Nation sometimes at an alarming rate, a hundred thousand here a couple million there many times without much regard to services to our people

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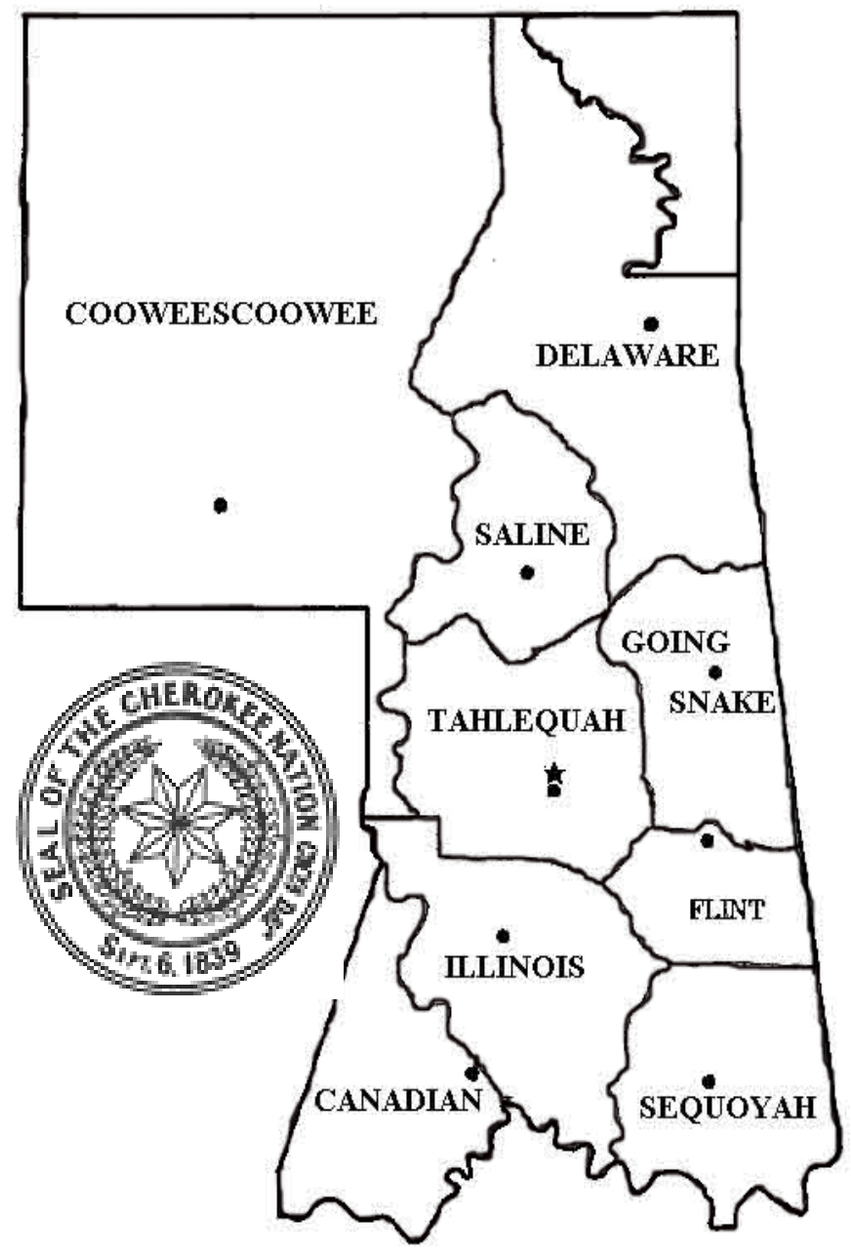

Article XIII. Oath

Section 1. All officers elected or appointed shall, before entering upon the duties of their respective offices, take and subscribe to the following oath or affirmation:

"I do solemnly swear, or affirm, that I will faithfully execute the duties of _____ of the Cherokee Nation, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitutions of the Cherokee Nation, and the United States of America. I swear or affirm further, that I will do everything within my power to promote the culture, heritage and traditions of the Cherokee Nation."

Section 2. The foregoing oath shall be administered by any person authorized by the Council to administer oaths. The oath shall be filed in the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer.

Executive Branch

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Chad Smith
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He lives outside of the Cherokee Nation in Sapulpa, OK. Which is in violation to Cherokee Law.

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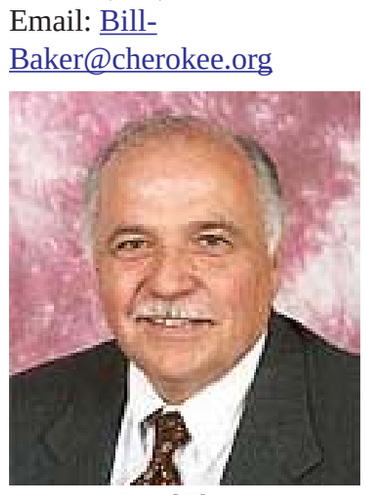
The Cherokee people voted to have the tribal council represent the Cherokees in their district. Not just their personal view or opinion or what the Chief tells them to do.



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The Cherokee Observer welcomes letters to the Editor. All letters must be signed and include the writer's address. Lettersmay be edited for space and or libelous content. Names may be withheld upon request. Letters will be published as space permits. Letters to the Editor express the views of the writer and donot necessarily reflect the view of the Cherokee Observer. 0206

Annual Chilocco Indian School Reunion

Press Release: February 13, 2006, by Chilocco National Alumni Association

The Chilocco National Alumni Association's (CNAA) annual reunion is scheduled for June 9, 10, & 11, 2006 at the Radisson Hotel, 10918 E. 41st St. in Tulsa, Ok, according to Jim Baker, 1960 graduate of Chilocco and President of the association. Activities will begin Friday morning with a golf tournament at 7:00 a.m. at the Cherokee Hills Golf Club in Catoosa. Afternoon schedule include an Indian style show, talent show, and a performance by the Cherokee Nation Children's Choir. Attendees are encouraged to wear their tribal attire and join Cherokee Nation Chief Chad Smith and Mrs. Smith as they participate in the style show. A pow wow will close out the Friday evening activities.

The activities on Saturday morning will begin with the traditional Veteran's Breakfast at 7:00 a.m., the business meeting at 10:00 a.m., and a pool tournament at Magoo's Restaurant and Billiard. The traditional alumni banquet will begin at 5:00 p.m. followed by the Hall of Fame induction. Seminole Nation of Oklahoma Chief, Enoch Kelly Haney, a famous artist and former state Senator, will be an honored guest and assist with the Hall of Fame induction of 1966 graduate Mitchell Cypress, Chairman of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Mr. George England, Class of 1954 will also be inducted into the Hall of Fame. A ballroom dance will close out the evening activities.

A Memorabilia Room will be open during the reunion. Yearbooks from all school years, pictures and various Chilocco items will be displayed. Chilocco, located in Kay Co. Oklahoma, south of Arkansas City, Kansas, opened in 1884. It was one of the largest and most diverse Indian school in the United States with an enrollment, during its peak years, of over 1,200 students. The students came from all tribes and all reservations and Indian communities in the U.S. The school was closed in 1980. According to Baker, Chilocco graduates are represented in all areas of the country, in all professions and many hold, or have held, tribal, state and national leadership positions as exemplified by Chairman Cypress. All students, former employees and friends are invited to attend and participate. Arts and craft booth space are available. Cost for booth space may be obtained by calling James Edward at 918 742-1549.

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Over A Million For Lobbyist and Public Relations Campaign

in my opinion. Tonight we are being asked to spend $750,000 on a TV campaign to tell how good we are and to spend a half million to give to politicians." O'Leary explained, "We already spend a lot of money on public relations salaries, advertising and our monthly tribal newspaper. With this amount of money we can give 125 Cherokee students a complete and free education, we can build 25 homes at $50,000 each, we can perform 42 life saving surgeries at $30,000 each, we can get water in the home to people that are on a three year waiting list, provide eyeglasses and dialysis and many qualifying Cherokees along with countless other needed services. We already spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on public relations salaries right now. If the State legislators are not abreast of Cherokee Nation's assistance to the communities within our Nation, I would suggest that the Chief get in gear and go inform them of what is going on," stated O'Leary.

The Observer recently found the administration spends over a million dollars each year, in excess of $84,000 each month, on the Cherokee Advocate/Phoenix tribal newspaper.

Melvina Shotpouch a Delaware District Councilor said, "With my people the need is today. We put this money out now in this method and we may or may not see an effect in four years. It's just politics. We spend a lot of money on median already and to have people here that are supposed to already be doing this as well as having an office in Washington D.C. where it is their job to work with the legislature up there. In my district the people know when the Cherokee Nation is helping the communities because there are always articles in the paper from the County Commissioners thanking us for our support. If the people don't know in your district then it's your own fault. Shotpouch made a motion that if the Council is to move forward on this expenditure that a matched amount of $750,000 be placed in a fund for eyeglasses, water wells and whatever services the people need right now.

However the motion was cut short by Cowen, one of the Chief's political slate members, who took the discussion back to a motion to approve the expenditure as it was proposed by the Chief. Cowen said, "The money will go only toward media purchases. None of us are going to change how politics happens today. So we have to operate in the next 5, 10 let alone a hundred years.," she said.

She continued, "Current state compacts are projected to generate $10 million in revenue. These two decisions lead to something else. It's much bigger part of the decision and picture out there. I just really wished we could have all of you at committee meetings when we discuss these things, I guess," said Cowen.

According to Cowen's statement the media blitz and campaign contribution pool would expend over 10% of the tribes compact moneys that the Council is free to appropriate toward anything within the tribe unlike federal earmarked money.

David Thornton a Councilor for the Sequoyah County District stated, "The thing that bothers me about these two items being put on this Act is I haven't seen any documentation or itemized cost estimates on how we're going to spend this money. The Council is like the CPA watching the money. We are the oversight for the people and need to have that information accompanying these kinds of proposals. Now, what I really think is that we Indians have had to fight for everything we have ever gotten. Many times we have to fight all the way to the Supreme Court of this land to preserve our rights. Spending money trying to convince non-Indians that the tribe is doing a good job is a waste of good money and is not going to change anyone's mind." Thornton continued, "I can not support such an open ended proposal."

Audrey Smoke Conner, a Cherokee District Councilor stated, "I agree this is a lot of money to spend on an ad campaign when we have folks out there with very, very serious needs just as Councilor O'Leary has brought to our attention. We all hear these stories in everyone of our districts. We as Cherokees know what we're doing. We as a government know what we're doing to help people in our districts. I have people in my district that have asked me to really consider this and I have. But I am going to have to support it because if we don't educate we will eventually eliminate."

The question was called with the vote approving the expenditure as follows:
YES – Meredith Swimmer Frailey, Audrey Smoke Connors, Buel Anglen, Bill Johnson, Jackie Bob Martin, Don Garvin, Phyllis Yargee, Johnny Keener, Bill John Baker, Chuck Hoskin.
NO – Joe Crittenden, Linda O'Leary, Melvina Shotpouch, David Thornton, John Keener

Cherokee citizens told the Observer they plan a referendum this month to stop the unnecessary expenditure of service dollars until the people can vote on it. According to Cherokee law citizens have 90 days from the time the Act is passed to return the appropriate number of signatures to the Election Commission.

The entire meeting can be viewed in streaming video on the Cherokee Nation website at http://www.cherokee.org/home.aspx?section=councilminutes

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Election Commission Deny Petitioners After Two Year Wait

member of the commission, Haskins and Bunch consecutively resigned after their attempt failed to thwart Hathaway from taking his rightful seat in a Commission vote following Smith's initial attempt to renege approval of Hathaway by a memo sent to the Commission.

In September, four months after Hathaway was selected by Commissioners, Smith filed a suit in the Judicial Appeals Tribunal, JAT, asking the court to rule Hathaway was not actually confirmed when Smith signed his approval of the Council Resolution confirming Hathaway unanimously 14-0 stating in the suit that he was just approving Councils' right to approve the selection. Evidence in the case showed Smith had vetoed numerous Resolutions during his tenure and on December 20, 2005 the JAT ruled against Smith and ordered that Hathaway was a duly seated Commissioner stating Smith should use his veto authority consistently.

Crittenden told Commissioners, were due to be returned only two employees of the commission existed and they were being directed by the administration which is direct violation of law. According to Cherokee law when there is no commission in place, employees are to answer to the Rules Committee of the Council.

Morton's comment was, oking at Crittenden and remarking, Morton's son is an attorney in the Law and Justice Department and her husband was recently hired both working under the administration of the Chief.

Crittenden said that petitioners chose to hold the petitions until a valid commission was seated rather than submitting petitions that contained signatures of Cherokee Nation employees to the same administration that had just ordered petitioners out of the tribal clinics.

A suit still pending was filed against Smith and his General Council Julian Fite for interference with the Election Commission. The suit also alleges violations of the Cherokee citizens' civil rights, to circulate petitions as provided under the Cherokee Constitution and other rights protected under the Indian Civil Rights Act and Constitution of the United States. Crittenden said that the Election Commission is an autonomous body that has serious consequences to any elected official found guilty of interfering with the duties thereof to an extreme of banishment from the tribe.

Shade said, traditionally be called gathering places still within our society today where people sit and talk. We collected signatures within the clinics for nearly three months prior to being ordered out of the Mankiller and Salina Clinics only four days before petitions were due to be returned. We were neither trespassing nor interfering with employees' duties,

Proponents say the administration sent a memo to clinic directors that petition carriers would be required to possess written permission from the Law and Justice Department of the Cherokee Nation authorizing them to circulate petitions within tribal clinics. Crittenden said that there has to be law in place that supports a policy and that a memo which is in violation of the Constitution is invalid on its face.Petitioners said they were escorted out of the facilities just months after the Smith administration had posted Brad Carson for U.S. Senator Campaign signs on clinic and tribal properties and had personally circulated political campaign literature to employees and citizens throughout the tribal clinics.

Shade said that ninety five percent of everyone petitioners approached, signed the petitions and ninety nine percent of all elders asked signed them.

Crittenden said, people supported our questions and it was heartwarming to hear elders everywhere we went commending us on the positive effort we were making,proximately 75 petition carriers assisted in the three month drive.

Proponents say they plan to exhaust the administrative remedies to test the integrity of the system. A suit will be filed against the Election Commission asking the JAT to rule that the ninety day period has not yet elapsed because a valid Commission was never seated without question until Smith v. Hathaway was decided in December.

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Pending Petitions Derail Chief's Plans for Lawsuit

would affect all Resident Cherokees and representation to residents would be canceled out by a non residential Councilor. Within the legislative branch it creates the exact same problem we presently have in our election process and destroys the democracy within that body," he said. "It's like Californians being able to vote in Oklahoma elections to raise our taxes just because one of their ancestors once lived in Oklahoma," said Crittenden.

Crittenden said some of the statements made by Smith and Cowen during the meeting were deceptive and outright lies. He said while gathering signatures during the petition drive at a Sequoyah football game in Keys, he personally approached Chad Smith and asked if he would like to support the petitions. Crittenden said Smith stomped off mumbling, "I'm not going to sign those damned petitions."

Hastings Shade the other proponent of the four petitions served as Deputy Chief in Smiths first term. Shade chose to run independent for Deputy in the 2003 Election rather than on the same ticket with Smith because of first hand experience with Smith during the first term.

The four petitions were: 1. To require residency be established to vote by absentee ballot and only for good cause such as incapacitation, being hospitalized or on military duty, 2. To Recall of the 1999 Constitution, 3. To mandate a residency requirement to be a Delegate on any Constitutional Convention, 4. To elect JAT Justices rather than remain appointed by a Chief.

According to law the Commission has the duty and authority to hire council who must be independent from and without any other duties within the Cherokee Nation to assure the Commission is truly autonomous. Proponents say they plan to file the four petitions shortly after the Thursday Commissioner meeting to allow the Commission to select an attorney.

Attention Class Of 1967 Sequoyah Alumni

You are invited to participate in the planning of **our Reunion for 2007.**
Please bring pictures or year books. Hope to see you.

At Our Next Class Planning meeting to be held at,
Place: Ryan's Family Steak House
8110 E. 74th Place
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Phone: (918) 250-5502
Date: April 2, 2006 (Sunday)
Time: 3:00pm.
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"Our program can fill a need for working Native American families desiring to become homeowners but find themselves struggling to come up with the down payment and other costs associated with the purchase of a home," Tom Seth Smith, REI President & CEO said. "And, we always appreciate the opportunity to work with local lenders to help meet the housing needs in their community."

According to Smith, over 1,400 Oklahoma families have utilized REI's program to purchase the home of their dreams.

The Section 184 program was designed to improve access to capital for Native Americans, act as a credit enhancement mechanism for lenders and provide private funding opportunities for tribal housing agencies. "When these programs are combined, everyone's a winner," Smith said.

REI is a non-profit economic

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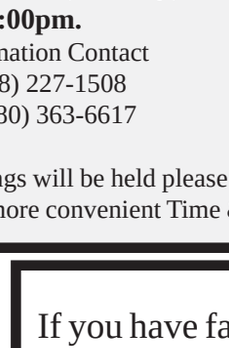

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Pending Petitions Derail Chief's Plans for Lawsuit

Crittenden said, "So long as elected officials can find their votes outside of the boundaries, they don't have to be as concerned if services provided by this government are adequate. Citizens living in the service area are being disenfranchised by our own election process because disinterested citizens are canceling out our vote. We don't have a democratic election process when disinterested parties cancel out the vote of the people who are directly affected by the outcome of the elections. That's what the US is fighting against in Iraq." he said.

Cowen portrayed during the Council meeting that she had no knowledge of any petitions in circulation. However in an obvious effort to circumvent the motion, she struggled to explain petition law that governs petition procedures. Cowen gave a scenario that there may possibly be petitions out there. However "those petitions may be outside of the time limit allowed by the law to submit them today," she said.

Proponent Crittenden told reporters, "There has never been a valid Election Commission to date without question, to submit our petitions. The law clearly says petitions are to be returned to the Election Commission, not employees of the Commission. We finally have a Commission who can be held accountable to the people according to petition law."

Councilor Linda O'Leary of Delaware County stated, "There are issues here other than just the filing of the petitions or the Election Commission accepting those. We don't have the IA approval yet. It's premature to consider this legislation because there is a pending Freedmen lawsuit both in federal court and another one at the Judicial Appeals Tribunal (JAT), level. Finally constitutionally speaking it is still questionable whether or not the people were misinformed because the constitution says that we are to vote on each amendment separately," she said. "The way the question was presented on the ballot was a simple yes or no vote like it was only one amendment. We need to table this so we can go back and revisit these issues and give our process a chance to work," said O'Leary.

Councilor Jackie Bob Martin, from Adair County, along with Cowan is on the Chief's political slate said, "At the moment I am confused about the issue and I would like Chief Chad Smith to give an opinion of this issue right now and tell us what we're doing."

Smith said, "I can't speculate. I haven't heard anything about a petition."

The constituents they represent because persons living outside the boundaries aren't under Cherokee law and federal service money is mandated to be spent inside the jurisdiction. However every issue

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DOWN PAYMENT AND CLOSING COST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO NATIVE AMERICAN HOMEBUYERS

development firm with corporate headquarters in Durant, OK. The organization has served Oklahoma communities for more than 20 years with programs to help build better businesses, create jobs, strengthen neighborhoods and empower citizens to achieve the quality of life they want and deserve.

Currently, REI is working with Native American tribes and lenders throughout the state to create more awareness about the program and the opportunity it provides for the prospective homebuyer. For more information, contact Randall Latham at 800-658-2823. To find out more about REI and its economic development

To Cherokee Observer:

My name is Jennifer Sentel and I was at the Pawnee Indian Health Clinic recently, and notice your paper. I too am Cherokee and I live in Ponca City. I was excited when I noticed that your paper was out of Blackwell. I thought that you might like to hear a little bit of history about my grandfather, a Cherokee, Joe C Patton who lived most of his life in Marland and Billings Oklahoma. When my grandfather as a young man, he worked on the famous Miller Brothers 101 Wild West Rodeo, he sold tickets and because he was Native American, he was occasionaly in the acts. My grandfather owned and operated the "only" lumber yard in Marland Oklahoma (back then it was known as Bliss Ok). Not only did he own the lumber yard he was also a skilled carpenter. One day a family came to him with a special request, they were needing a special box made, It was to lay the great "Bill Picket" to rest in. Bill Picket was buried on the grave site of Chief White Eagle. My grandfather was also the catcher for the only "all Indian Baseball team". We still have his ball glove today. He shared many stories with us. Although he was from Stilwater Ok, I think that he called Marland and Billings home. My family still lives in Tahlequah, but my grandfather is buried here at Tonkawa. His real name is Clifton B. Patton, but somehow took on the nickname "Joe" and that's how everyone knew him. My great great grandparents and other relatives remained in Stilwell and Tahlequah, land was issued to each of the family members by the Goverment, we still have a map that shows the divied lands and what was given to my grandfather. He always had a home in Tahlequah and was always there, but chose to stay most of the time in Billings. My father Loran Patton still lives there, on Park Hill (Tenkiller Lake). I am proud of my Cherokee heritage, but I am so far away from home, it's hard to know the Cherokee ways and traditions. I try to pass what I can down to my childern, my youngest daughter made the American Legion Buffalo Post #38 this year, her name is LeighAn Sentel. It is good to hear that Cherokees are over this way, sometimes I think I am alone. I hope you didn't mind me sharing some things from an old Cherokee Indian, that time has forgoten. Thank you for your time

Jennifer Sentel

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The Indian Community School seeks an outstanding leader who will devote his/her energy to ensuring that its students will receive an education of the highest quality within the traditions of American Indian values and cultures.

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The Indian Community School will be relocating to a new facility that is under construction in Franklin, WI. The new school will provide a setting of the highest quality for the 350 inter-tribal students and 95 staff members employed by the School, and will provide ample opportunities for the students and staff to engage in a variety of programs that respect and focus on the heritage and cultures of American Indians (especially Nations in the Great Lakes Region). To learn more about the School and the opportunities this position provides, visit www.ics-milw.org.

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Wild sunflower an important clan symbol

This is the second in a series of short articles on plants important to the Cherokees. Last issue the rare Golden seal was discussed. This issue reveals a beautiful plant used primarily as a symbol of one of the seven Cherokee clans.

Black-eyed susan, as it is known in English, is a minor medicinal

plant, used in teas to provide assistance to those with vision problems. Its roots are believed to be poisonous and never used. Only the bright yellow petals are steeped in hot water and drank to provide glaucoma relief and other eye relief.

This plant is also a symbolic plant, and is the floral representative of the Deer clan. Its Cherokee name, A-wi A-k(a)-ta, literally means deer eye, and is derived from the dark brown center, reminiscent of a deer's eye.

This plant is probably among the most common member of the Aster family, of which Echinacea is the most famous member, known for the medicinal property of its roots. Black-eyed susans grow abundantly along roadsides and in other disturbed area with full sun and can be enjoyed throughout the Cherokee Nation all summer long.

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